

### Business Challenges

#### Guidance on the assistance available to your business if you

- **Have challenges with your cashflow**
- [Face staffing issues](#)
- [Need support to develop and grow](#)

There are many challenges facing business in Swansea Bay at the present time but the 3 main areas where most questions are being raised are these. Below is a summary of main assistance which is available at the moment.

#### Challenges with cashflow

##### **Enterprise Finance Guarantee**

The UK Government has a number of schemes which can support your enterprise. Of particular interest may be UK Government bank loan guarantees for viable businesses unable to get a loan or consolidation of overdrafts in the current climate. Loans between £1,000 and £1million are available to cover loans up to 10 years, existing lending and conversion of part or all of an existing overdraft to release capital requirements. Available to existing SMEs with an annual turnover of up to £25million. Contact [www.business-support-wales.gov.uk](http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk) 03000 6 03000

##### **Commercial Lending**

Many of the major banks are represented in Swansea Bay. If you need assistance then it's worth approaching the local commercial contacts first... for a full list of contacts please see the Swansea Business Directory <http://www.burrows.co.uk/swansea/>

See also '[Finance to Grow](#)' information on page 5

#### Help with staff issues

If you are facing challenges on staff issues and a member of WWCC then its worth remembering that they offer a comprehensive HR service, delivered through the Chamber HR website and a dedicated 24 hour advice line. [www.wwcc.co.uk](http://www.wwcc.co.uk) / 01792 653297

##### **Training existing staff in new skills**

You may find that your existing staffing does not meet your current needs, in which case it's worth looking at options for training them in the new skills you do need. WAG offer a **Workforce Development Programme** to help businesses become more profitable through improved staff skills, including up to 70% grant funding is available towards staff training costs for smaller businesses, to a maximum of £1,000. For more information contact 0845 606 6160 [www.business-support-wales.gov.uk](http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk)

**Employment Training:** One of the largest vocational training providers in Wales, Employment Training in Fforestfach, Swansea has successfully worked with local and national businesses for over 20 years, helping to address and reduce the skills shortages and close skills gaps across the County of Swansea. They can provide information, support and training opportunities to locally based businesses and individuals in a wide range of occupational areas, some of which

are part financed by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Assembly Government. For more information, visit <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=8558> or contact (01792) 482680, mail: [employmenttraining@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:employmenttraining@swansea.gov.uk)

**ProAct:** This is a WAG funded scheme providing support where short-time working has been introduced and redundancies are being considered. Funding of up to £2,000 of training is available with a further £2,000 wage subsidy available while training is underway. Contact 03000 6 03000 [www.business-support-wales.gov.uk](http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk)

If you're looking to take on new staff then there are lots of ways in which you can get help with costs by considering particular groups

**Go Wales:** Go Wales offer a variety of services to help you recruit and retain graduate staff. This includes supported work placements of 6 – 10 weeks to undertake a specific project... and you could receive up to £90 per week towards the weekly wage, if you are an SME. You could also take advantage of the cash support for training graduate members of your existing staff and get help to recruit a graduate by advertising a vacancy free of charge. Find out more at <http://www.gowales.co.uk/en/employer/index.html>

**ReAct:** A WAG subsidy for employers taking on an employee who is under notice of redundancy or has been made redundant from a company in Wales in the last 6 months. An employer subsidy of £2,080 is paid plus 70% reimbursement of training support for each individual employed up to a maximum of £1,000. [www.wales.gov.uk/react](http://www.wales.gov.uk/react) 01792 765888

**Access to Work:** Through Access to Work, Jobcentre Plus can offer a grant towards the approved employment costs that arise because of an individual's disability, which an employer would not normally be expected to meet. The scheme focuses on disabled people who have a job to start or are already in paid employment, providing practical, flexible support with overcoming work related obstacles from disability which can be tailored to suit the needs of an individual in a particular job. Contact the Disability Employment Adviser in your local Jobcentre or call 01792 494000 to be directed. [www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG4000347](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG4000347)

**Work Trials:** These offer an opportunity for a potential unemployed applicant to 'trial' a specific job role without giving up the security of benefit and for an employer to check suitability. Work Trials are at no financial cost to the employer. If the applicant is not suitable for the role there is no commitment to offer paid employment. As well as benefitting the applicant, it gives the employer a chance to 'try before you buy' and means that there is less likelihood of the employee leaving due to lack of understanding or suitability for the job. Work trials usually last between 1 and 15 working days and a job opportunity lasting a minimum of 13 weeks should be available to the candidate if they are successful during the 'work trial.' The hours should be 16 hours or more. Contact the Labour Market Recruitment Adviser in your local Jobcentre or call 01792 494000 to be directed. [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/Programmesandservices/Worktrial/index.html](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/Programmesandservices/Worktrial/index.html)

**Employer Recruitment Subsidy:** Dubbed a 'Golden Hello' by some in the media, employing an eligible person who has claiming Jobseekers Allowance for six months or more could mean a grant of £1000 from Jobcentre Plus. The job must last a minimum of 26 weeks and be for 16 hours or more a week. For further Information contact the Labour Market Recruitment Adviser in your local Jobcentre or call 01792 494000 to be directed [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Employers/AdvertiserVacancy/recruitmentssubsidy/Dev\\_016226.xml.html](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Employers/AdvertiserVacancy/recruitmentssubsidy/Dev_016226.xml.html)

**Local Employment Partnerships (LEP):** A partnership between local employers and Jobcentre Plus (JCP), the agreements allow employers and Jobcentres to work together to unlock the talent available in local communities. A range of help is provided by JCP to support employers' recruitment campaigns such as:

- JCP funded Work Trials
- Pre-employment training courses
- Help to review recruitment processes so no one is excluded from applying
- Promoting family friendly policies and flexible working.

Further information: <http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Employers/lep/index.html> or contact your Local Labour Market Recruitment Adviser in your local Jobcentre or call 01792 494000 to be directed

## Support to develop & grow

The current economic climate is not necessarily bad news. It could provide your company with the incentive to review your business, seek new markets and customers or to invest in innovation. Assistance is available for many of these areas

## New Customers in Wales & UK

### **Beyond Bricks and Mortar:**

The Business Centre Swansea is leading the fore runner to a new City & County of Swansea training and supply chain opportunity initiative that maximises the benefits of regeneration. The scheme encourages Contractors to utilise local SME's and give training opportunities to local people wherever possible. This initiative builds on the success of other sourcing initiatives such as Contract Shop, Local Supplier Development and SA1 Sourcing. A Charter will be created outlining the aims of the scheme and a database of relevant companies to ensure that SMEs gain maximum benefit. SMEs will be encouraged to sign up to the charter and the database and contractors will be directed to it as a source of local firms.

Contact [businesscentreswansea@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:businesscentreswansea@swansea.gov.uk) 01792 545050

### **Local Procurement:**

WAG offers advice and assistance with selling your products to the public sector and major contractors, including supplier development support. Contact [www.business-support-wales.gov.uk](http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk) 03000 6 03000

### **Public Sector**

Make sure your business is registered with [www.sell2wales.co.uk](http://www.sell2wales.co.uk) which as well as advertising contracts being offered by public sector organisations gives you the opportunity to promote your company, contact registered public sector organisations, seek advice and much, much more.

### **Major Event Trading opportunities**

There are opportunities for companies to bid for work in relation to both the **Ryder Cup 2010** and the **London 2012 Olympic Games**. **CompeteFor** is a free service which acts as a brokerage service between buyers throughout the London 2012 supply chain, and potential suppliers. It also provides access to business support services; building skills and capacity to ensure that businesses across the UK can access opportunities linked to the hosting of the London 2012 Games. <https://www.competefor.com/london2012business/login.jsp>

## Trading overseas

In the current economic climate Welsh produced goods and services can offer a compelling proposition in many overseas markets. WAG offers support for those already exporting as well as companies new to the idea. Advice is tailored but can include selecting and researching overseas markets, identifying routes to market, understanding pricing and developing a marketing plan. Contact [www.business-support-wales.gov.uk](http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk) 03000 6 03000

Through the **Business Centre Swansea (BSC)** local companies have access to International Business Wales' Export Assist programme as well as advice and support on exporting to areas in Europe and China. BSC also run regular inter-trading events, working with International Business Wales. [businesscentreswansea@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:businesscentreswansea@swansea.gov.uk) or 01792 545050

The **West Wales Exporters Association** has been established to provide a meeting place for experienced and new exporters and international traders. It presents an opportunity for networking and gaining information from colleagues with experience of markets around the world. Contact Marilyn Evans at the Business Centre Swansea on 08452939382 or email [info@westwalesexporters.co.uk](mailto:info@westwalesexporters.co.uk) Web Site [www.westwalesexporters.co.uk](http://www.westwalesexporters.co.uk)

**West Wales Chamber of Commerce** provide services which have been designed to help new and experienced exporters get the most out of trading overseas, from creating new contacts and exploring overseas markets to providing a fully comprehensive documentation service and advice on customs procedures. The Chamber has a close connection with West Wales Exporters Association (see above) and is able to share the experience of others. [www.wwcc.co.uk](http://www.wwcc.co.uk) / 01792 653297

## Innovation in Business

WAG can help a business to grow by becoming more innovative, developing new and improved products and processes, adopting new technologies and investing in research and development. What's on offer is free and impartial advice from an innovation specialist and assistance with funding Contact [www.business-support-wales.gov.uk](http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk) 03000 6 03000

## Finance to Grow

As well as the usual commercial lenders, there are a number of specific options to look at

**Finance Wales** makes commercial investments in Wales-based businesses with the potential to grow. They invest in small to medium-sized enterprises – those which

- Employ fewer than 250 people
- Have an annual turnover no greater than **€50 million**

Specifically focused on businesses at an early stage, those seeking expansion, those looking to buy into a business or preparing for flotation. Finance Wales can help find a funding package tailored to business needs and work with companies as the business grows, considering additional funding rounds when necessary. [www.financewales.co.uk](http://www.financewales.co.uk) 01792 762350

**WAG** has a number of schemes which can assist including the **Single Investment Fund** which offers funding for different elements of the same project, including capital investment and revenue funding, R & D and training – open to business operating beyond the local market, but with the project based in Wales. [www.business-support-wales.gov.uk](http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk) 03000 6 03000

**Swansea** is also one of five local Council's in South West Wales that offer smaller capital investment grants of £1,000 - £5,000 through the **South West Wales Local Investment Fund**, in support of projects relating to growth, diversification and adaptation.

For further information on either of the above contact the **Business Centre Swansea** on 01792 545050 or [businesscentreswansea@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:businesscentreswansea@swansea.gov.uk)

### ICT Support

E-Business is fundamental to the successful and efficient running of any business today. Information Technology (ICT) integration enables and improves business processes and management between suppliers, manufacturers and customers. In today's economic climate quick efficient and effective communications and information management are critical to stay ahead of the game and reduce overhead costs. The solution and systems offered are limited only by the needs of the business – funding is available for eligible business for the following...

#### **ICT Diagnostic**

Businesses can receive an impartial health check which can identify opportunities for business improvement through ICT and clearly explains the business benefits such as greater efficiency, productivity, profitability, competitiveness and cost cutting.

#### **Comprehensive e-Business Support**

Business that need to extensively integrate new or improved ICT systems can draw upon e-Business Support. This complete package of skills resources and finance begins with a detailed business process mapping exercise in order to discover all opportunities for ICT integration.

for more information contact **The Business Centre Swansea** on 01792 545050 or [businesscentreswansea@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:businesscentreswansea@swansea.gov.uk)

### General Business Support

There are of course many other scenarios in which companies like yours need assistance. For information on the wide range of support provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, please visit [www.business-support-wales.gov.uk](http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk)

For the Business Centre Swansea, contact [businesscentreswansea@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:businesscentreswansea@swansea.gov.uk) 01792 545050

### Swansea Productivity Commission

Increased productivity is a strategic aim on the Swansea Economic Regeneration Strategy Swansea 2020. Since the Swansea Productivity Commission first met in 19th September 2007 it has developed and implemented a work program to better understand productivity and the reasons for Swansea's productivity gap. The commission has now completed this work and has observed that Swansea's GVA per worker (productivity) was £33,041 only 84% of the UK average. The productivity commission have proposed a 5 point improvement plan to help improve the productivity of businesses in the area placing particular emphasis on utilising the many initiatives available to local organisations to address productivity priorities. The plan includes:

- 1) Improving leadership and management
- 2) Investing in people
- 3) Growing market demand
- 4) Creating better ways of working
- 5) Reducing red tape.

The Commission is currently in discussion with WAG to identify the resources available to support a pilot productivity improvement programme involving local companies. If you are interested in finding out more please visit [www.swansea2020.com/productivitycommission](http://www.swansea2020.com/productivitycommission)

Information collated on behalf of [Swansea2020](http://Swansea2020) by Swansea Bay Futures working with WWCC, Job Centre Plus, Welsh Assembly Government, the Business Centre Swansea and Swansea Bay Partnership

